

THE SPIRIT'S OFFICE TOWARDS DISCIPLES

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“He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”
John 16:14

[Other sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this passage are as follows:
#465, The Holy Spirit glorifying Christ;
#2213, Honey in The Mouth, #2382, The Holy Spirit's Chief Office.
An exposition of John 16:1-22, was published with #3052, Christ's Loneliness and Ours]

MANY persons are anxiously asking the question, “Are we partakers of the Holy Spirit?” With enlarged anxiety, they reason thus, “We have felt certain inward emotions. There has been in us, we trust, a change of life. Eager are our desires for God and His grace. Do these come of the Spirit of God? When we find a suggestion which appears to be holy in our soul, does it come from Him? When we are at any time filled with earnestness and pray, or our soul has peculiar delight in considering divine things, may we say with truth that we are under the operation of the Holy Spirit?”

I do not intend to go thoroughly into the resolution of these scruples—that would be too wide a subject for a short evening's discourse—but there is one point which may often relieve your perplexities. It appears from the text that it is the work and office and custom of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ. If, therefore, with much strength and fervor in your soul, you glorify Him, you may trust that it comes from the Spirit of God.

But if there be anything in you which is derogatory to the character or person or glory of the Lord Jesus, it may either come from Satan or from your own corrupt mind. But from the Spirit of God it never did come and it would be blasphemy to impute it to Him. Whatever you feel which lifts Christ on high in your soul, comes of the Spirit—but whatever there may be which exalts self or anything else in the place of Christ—come whence it may—from the Holy Spirit it never did proceed.

Let us then just handle this point. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ in His people. How does He do it and how far may I judge that He is at work in me?

One way in which the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ is *this—He gives us more and more debasing views of our own selves*. There are two Gods, as it were. One the true, the other the false. Self first mounts the throne in our heart, and the higher the throne of self is exalted, the lower must Christ go. Much of self, little of the Savior. Exalted views of self, self-power, or self-righteousness, and then there are sure to be low views of Christ.

But when self goes down, then Christ at once rises. It may be said of self, as John the Baptist once said of Christ and himself, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” If you have had shallow views of your own natural depravity, then you have had very shallow thoughts of Christ. If you think sin to be delightful, if Gethsemane, and Golgotha, and Calvary seem to you to be names without weight or meaning, if you have never groaned under sin, I do not wonder that you think little of Christ's groans, and griefs, and bloody sweat.

But when you come to know yourself as verily lost and undone, then you will prize your Deliverer. When the dread word “lost!” has seemed to fall like a death knell upon your ear, then the tidings that the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost will be as sweet to you as the Christmas carol

of the angels, when they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." If you feel the disease, you will value the Physician. If you know your own emptiness, you will prize Christ's fullness.

But if you reject the teaching of the Holy Spirit, which shows you your utter helplessness and worthlessness, in so doing you have rejected Christ, and put far from you that Savior who alone came to save sinners. It is, then, a most precious thing when we begin to sink lower and lower in our own estimation. At the commencement of spiritual life, we believe that we are nothing. As we advance, we find that we are less than nothing. May the Holy Spirit so work in you!

Some of you are, perhaps, depending and thinking that you are not children of God, or else you would not be so cast down as you are. I pray you to understand this matter aright. Instead of having any reason for despondency, you will find a subject for joy, for I am sure that the Spirit is honoring Christ when He is lowering you in your own estimation.

Still more to the point, when the Holy Spirit really works in the heart of man, He honors Christ in every respect. *He honors the person of Christ.* Those who think but little of His deity are not taught of the Spirit of God. No man is taught by the Holy Spirit to regard the only-begotten Son of the Father as a secondary God, for the Holy Spirit teaches us upon this wise, "When he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, "And let all the angels of God worship him." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

The Spirit ever teaches concerning Christ that He is God over all, blessed forever. Some have had lowering views of His humanity. Every now and then we hear dark hints about the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, His peccability, and so on. But this never comes from the Spirit of God. Both the deity and the humanity of Christ receive honor in the Christian's soul when the Spirit comes there with light.

***"Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour, and power divine."***

That very man who did hang upon Calvary we now adore. He is exalted far above all principalities and powers. All teaching which honors Christ in His person is of the Spirit. And that which dishonors Him should be branded with its evil authorship.

The Spirit also glorifies Christ in His work. Have you ever seen the finished work of Christ? He came into the world to save men and He did save them. He did not make a bridge over which they might possibly get across, but He carried them across the bridge. He did not so far accomplish the work of redemption that, by their own exertions, some persons might climb to heaven, but He Himself entered into the heavenly places, and took possession, representatively, of the throne of God for all His people who were in Him.

The salvation of the elect, so far as Christ is concerned, is finished. He took upon His shoulders all their guilt. He was punished for that guilt and they were there and then justified. He rose again, having shaken off alike the punishment and the iniquities that incurred it. He entered into glory and they were there and then virtually made possessors of an inheritance which nothing will ever be able to take from them.

Let the Christian feel that the teaching which lowers the work of Christ, or makes it dependent upon the will of man as to its efficacy, puts the cross on the ground, and says, "That blood is shed, but it may be shed in vain, shed in vain for you"—let us all feel that such teaching comes not from the Spirit of God. That teaching which, pointing to the cross, says, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." That teaching which makes the atonement a true atonement which put away the vindictive justice of God forever from every soul for whom that atonement was offered, exalts Christ, and therefore, it is a teaching which comes from the Spirit of God.

When your heart is brought to rest upon what Christ has done, when, laying aside all confidence in your own works, knowledge, prayings, doings, or believings, you come to rest upon what Christ has

done in its simplicity—then is Jesus Christ exalted in your heart and it must have been the work of the Spirit of divine grace. The person, then, and the work of Christ are exalted.

The Holy Spirit also exalts Christ in all His offices. That teaching which calls a man a priest and bids me take my child to receive some grace at his priestly hands, and which puts another man into lawn sleeves, and bids me kneel before him to receive a confirmation of my grace from his pretentious fingers, that system of religion which lifts up any one man above his fellow men, as if there were any priests now, except the common and general priesthood which belongs to every child of God—such teaching as that lowers Christ by lifting up human priests into Christ's place.

The Spirit bears witness that Christ is the great High Priest of His church. It is from His hand we receive the blessing, through His blood we receive the washing, and nowhere else will we look for the grace that comes alone from Him.

Christ, too, is exalted by the Spirit in His prophetic as well as in His priestly office. Shall I call any man master so as to take him for my teacher? All teaching which lifts up Wesley, or Calvin, or any man, living or dead, in the place of *the* authorized Teacher, and which says that their *dicta* are to be taken as though they were the infallible revelations of Christ, is not of the Spirit of God. But that teaching which says, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," and which tells us of the holy equality of all saints, and that the true Teacher and the only Teacher who can speak with authority is Jesus Christ, the Son of God—such teaching you may accept as coming from God the Holy Spirit.

Then Christ occupies a third office. He is prophet and Priest—and He is also King. And any teaching which takes Christ off the throne, and puts someone else on, is not according to the Spirit of God. The headship of Christ in His church is *the* doctrine which, perhaps, beyond all others, needs to be taught at this time.

It was for this that Scotland's sons suffered misery and death. Cast out, they wandered in the morasses and among the mountains. I stood, but the other day, near the place where the monument is raised to thousands of men who had shed their blood for Christ—and I felt it no small privilege to stand where Guthrie and others had poured out their blood for the defense of the Headship of the church, when, forsooth, Charles the Second would be the head of the church, or James, or some other man of like character.

But would this be tolerated by true-hearted saints of God's own true church? Nay. None but cravens and cowards will ever admit the authority of men or women over the church of Christ, or permit them to usurp the rights divine of the Lord Jesus. When that day comes, when the King of kings shall sit upon His throne, He will take summary vengeance upon the traitors who have dared to give up His high prerogatives. Christian, make Christ your Priest who absolves you. Take Him as your only Leader and Prophet, who is the truth and the life to you. And then take Him as your King, and bow your knee become Him. Take Christ in all His offices to be exalted, for so the Spirit teaches.

Then *Christ is also exalted by the Holy Spirit in His Word.* There are some who think and say that they can do without the Bible. But such think and speak not by the Spirit of God certainly. This is always an infallible test of the work of the Spirit—that He honors God's own Word. I could think no man true who, first of all, professed to write out his own mind and then afterwards contradicted it. Then how can that spirit be true that contradicts the writing of the Spirit of the living God? Bring whatever you have of revelation to the test of Scripture—if it is accord not with that—throw it away.

I wish this rule were learned by all men, for every now and then we read of or meet with persons who think that the Spirit has revealed to them something over and above what is in Scripture. Now this is never the case. Any man, who says that he has had more revealed to him than is in the Holy Scriptures, incurs the curse of the last chapter of Revelation. He must take care lest, since he adds to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, "God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book." "It is finished," must be said concerning this Book as we close it. Not a single verse or revelation shall henceforth come of the Spirit. Until Christ comes, this Book is sealed, so far as any addition to it is concerned. And that is not the Spirit of God which does not honor the Word of God.

Indeed, *there is nothing which concerns Christ which the Spirit of God does not magnify*. Consider any of His offices or His relationships, and you will find that the Spirit magnifies them, and glorifies them—and so presents them to the believer's soul that he may rejoice therein.

Now, I advance a little further. The Holy Spirit's work is to glorify Christ and *this He will do by filling you with Christ*. If you are subject to the work of the Spirit, then ought you to have much of the spirit of Christ within you. But if you can live days and weeks without thinking of Christ, set yourself down as being a hypocrite if you will, for you are not a true Christian.

The very mark of the blessed man is that he lives upon God's Word. "In his law doth he meditate day and night." We feed upon Christ, and as our bodies could not live without food, so neither can our souls live without Jesus. The Spirit of God will also fill your heart with Christ so that, the more you have of that Spirit, the more intense will be your love of the Savior, until at last you will be able to say,—

***"Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast."***

When the Spirit of God is with you, you will feel indeed that it is so. No joy can be compared with that of the love of Christ shed abroad in your heart. When the Spirit has thus filled your thoughts and hearts, He will be sure to occupy your tongues. They who love the Savior must speak of Him. In choice company, they will tell some of the secrets of His love, and in any company they will not be ashamed to own that they are His servants.

Occupying their tongue, He will be sure also to engage it in prayer for Him, and they will not cease to offer such prayers as these—"Thy kingdom come, Jesus. Be Thou exalted. Oh, when will You come in Your chariot of salvation to ride over the whole earth? Come quickly, O come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

And then, too, your tongue will be employed in songs concerning Him. It is always a token of a revival of religion, it is said, when there is a revival of psalmody. When Luther's preaching began to tell upon men, you could hear ploughmen at the plough-tail singing Luther's psalms. Whitefield and Wesley would never have done the great work they did if it had not been for Charles Wesley's poetry and for the singing of such men as Toplady, and Scott, and Newton, and many others of the same class.

And even now we mark that, since there has been somewhat of a religious revival in our various denominations, there are more hymnbooks than ever there were before, and far more attention is paid to Christian psalmody than ever before. When your heart is full of Christ, you will want to sing. It is a blessed thing to sing at your labor and work, if you are in a place where you can do so.

And if the world should laugh at you, you must tell them that you have as good a right to sing the songs that delight your heart as they have to sing any of the songs in which their hearts delight. Praise His name, Christians. Be not dumb. Sing aloud to Jesus, the Lamb. And if we, as Englishmen, can sometimes sing our national air, let us as believers have our national hymn and sing,—

***"Crown Him, crown Him,
Crown Him Lord of all."***

And surely when the Spirit of God thus honors Christ in the tongue, it will not stop there. It comes to the acts of daily life. *The Spirit shall glorify Christ by helping you to glorify Him in your own actions*. I spoke, this morning [See sermon #626, The Waterer Watered] of some who set themselves apart for extraordinary service. I did not, however, intend to imply that that was at all necessary, for you may serve Christ as good housewives, you may serve Him as merchants, shopkeepers, and in short, in every condition of life.

Our religion is for the market-place, for the shop, for the streets, and for the field. And as God's being is not confined to temples made by the hands of men, but is present everywhere—on heath, and city, and moor, and field—in the sunbeams that light the peasant's cot as well as the monarch's palace—present in the minute as well as in the magnificent—down there in the glades where the red deer wander

and the child loves to play, and up there where the storms gather upon the mountain's hoary brow—as visible in a blade of grass as in the cedar and the tall waving pine—to be seen as well in the dewdrop as in the avalanche—as certainly in the falling of a leaf as in the tremendous roar of the thunder—everywhere present—so is true religion everywhere—in the cottage as well as in the temple, in business as well as in devotions, abroad in the streets as well as in the silence of retirement, up yonder where men wrestle with God, and down there where they come to contend with men and for His truth. You have never received the Spirit so as to know that Christ is the glorified One, unless in your life as well as with your lips you show forth His praise.

If the Spirit has thus far instructed you, He will conduct you a little further, and you *may accept His teaching because it glorifies Christ*. There are some doctrines which are not often preached in certain pulpits. They are supposed to be rather dangerous. Speaking of a certain hymnbook, I remarked to a minister in whose pulpit I preached, that I did not like the hymnbook, as I could never find a hymn that sang of the covenant of grace or the doctrine of election. “Oh, well!” he said, “that is no disadvantage to me, for I never say anything about those doctrines.” And I can quite believe what he said.

There are certain higher truths which only belong to those who have passed through the rudiments and have done with the grammar-school book, and can enter into the university. One of the things which glorify Christ is where the Spirit makes us understand the eternal love of Christ to His people and His covenant engagements for them.

Christian, I would have you know that Christ never did begin to love you! Before the mountains were piled, or the clouds had gathered about them, Christ had set His heart upon you. Nay, when this great world, and the sun, and moon, and stars slept in the mind of God like forests in an acorn-cup, then—then had JEHOVAH-Jesus love for you.

And when the proper time came, He offered Himself up as a Surety for your souls, to pay your debts, to stand as your Representative, to keep you in this world, and to present you at the last to the Father as a priceless jewel. Oh, how you will glorify Christ, if you have faith enough to take in this divine mystery! Stagger not at electing love—it is one of the highest notes of heavenly music. Be not afraid of such a verse as this—“I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Here is marrow and fatness such as saints fed upon in days long since gone.

Take another truth, the precious truth of the *finished* work of Christ for His people. How often do you hear Christ's work preached as if it were only begun, and many hold Him up as though He had commenced a fitting garment, but had left off somewhere so that by adding our rags we might complete the work.

I was in one of the vaults of the British Museum, some time since, when the sculptures came from Nineveh, and one of them was unfinished. There was evidently the last mark which the mason had made before he was destroyed or, it may be, called away from his work to which he never returned. But Jesus Christ has left no sculpture of this kind—He has *finished* all His work. “It is finished,” were words that gladdened earth and made heaven more glorious.

There is now nothing for souls to do to save themselves. For where Jesus died, that soul is saved, and all that that soul has to do is, being saved, to show its gratitude and love as one that is brought to life from the dead.

*“Loved of my God, for Him again
With love intense I burn;
Chosen of Him ere time began,
I chose Him in return.”*

You may know that perfection in Christ by a firm reliance upon the Scriptures. How can you perish? You are saved. There is, therefore, now no condemnation recorded against you. Who shall lay anything to your charge? Who shall separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, your Lord?

If there is one doctrine, however, more sweet and yet more deep than another, it is the divine doctrine of that eternal union which exists between Christ and His people. It is the Spirit's work to take the golden key and let us into this secret cabinet. Believers are one with Christ. By vital personal union they are one with Him. They are members of His body, or as He Himself says, they are the branches and He is the Vine. They are the members and He is the Head. I know of nothing that can be more delightful than this union—this eternal union—with Christ.

*“One in the tomb, one when He rose,
One when He triumphed over His foes,
One when in heaven, He took His seat,
While seraphs sang all hell's defeat.*

*“This sacred tie forbids our fears;
For all He is or has is ours;
With Him, our Head, we stand or fall,
Our Life, our Surety, and our all.”*

It used to be said by an excellent theologian, that any man who understood the two covenants of works and grace was a master in theology. [Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon on various aspects of the Covenant of Grace are as follows: #19, David's Dying Song; # 93, God in The Covenant; #103, Christ in The Covenant; #212, The New Heart; #233, Free Grace; #251, The Necessity of The Spirit's Work; #277, The Blood of The Everlasting Covenant; #456, The Stony Heart Removed; #517, The Rainbow; #714, A Savior Such As You Need; #1046, Covenant Blessings; #1129, The Heart of Flesh; #1186, The Blood of The Covenant; #1289, The Heart Full and The Mouth Closed; #1451, The Covenant Pleaded; #1840, The Bond Of The Covenant; #1886, God's Remembrance of His Covenant; #1921, Cleansing—A Covenant Blessing; #1942, Salt for Sacrifice; #2092, God's Own Gospel Call; #2108, Perseverance in Holiness; #2200, The Covenant Promise of The Spirit; #2316, Twelve Covenant Mercies; #2427, “The Ark of The Covenant”; #2438, “Two Immutable Things”; #2506, God's Law in Man's Heart and #3048, The Holy Spirit in The Covenant] Yet, oh how few Christians there seem to be who really understand the covenant of grace!

“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” We fell, not by our own fault, but by Adam's fault. And we rise, not by our own virtue, but by virtue of our union with Christ. If you are in Christ, believer, you are safe while Christ stands. You cannot drown the body until you drown the Head. My foot may be deep in the stream, but until the billows roll over my brow, my foot is not drowned—and until Christ shall perish, no soul that is one with Christ can be destroyed.

For He said to His disciples, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Did time permit, I might enter into some more of those sublime mysteries which make the core and pith of the comfort of the Christian, but I forbear. May the Spirit of God glorify Christ by taking these things of Christ and revealing them to you and making them personally yours!

And to close—the Holy Spirit will continue all your life, if you are a believer in Christ, to further His work in you *by writing all that concerns Christ upon your experience and your life*. I long to see in the church more men and women who have Christ so glorified in them that their faith never staggers—who have neither doubts nor fears, who know whom they have believed, who are persuaded that He is able to keep that which they have committed unto Him, who leave all things to the Father's wisdom—and find everything in a perfect Savior.

I long to see some of you, brethren, made partakers of our overflowing joy. I long to see your eyes flash with the joyous radiance of your Savior's presence. I pray that you may be so full of joy that, when you speak, you may cheer the downcast and lift up the countenances of the sad. I want you to have added to this an intense and fervent love—love which shall perform impossibilities, which shall dare anything for Christ—which, instinct with zeal, shall thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shall winnow the wheat from the chaff upon the threshing floor.

I pray that you may have that mighty consecration of spirit which shall make you altogether unearthly, that as you have borne the image of the earthy, you may also bear the image of the heavenly,

and that as you have been conformed to the first Adam in the curse, and in all the infirmities and griefs of this mortal life, you may be conformed to the second Adam in His pure unselfish love for man, His noble, all-daring, all-consuming love for His Father and for His cause.

I am persuaded that the Spirit does not glorify Christ in us so much as He would if we gave ourselves up more fully to the Savior. As one said, on a certain occasion, there is a fleet lying in the river, richly-laden, but it cannot come up, because the river is blocked up with ice. So I think I see my Master's love lying out far down the river, and it would fain come to my poor soul to enrich me, and make me holy and heavenly, but alas! the coldness of my heart, like ice, blocks up the channel and I get not what I might obtain.

Come, heavenly love, and melt the ice. Flow, streams of grace, and dissolve every barrier. Come, Jesus, come Thou into my heart and let Your treasures be mine for evermore! Oh, that I could stir some believers here to seek more than is generally enjoyed by Christians! May God give you the seraphic earnestness of a Whitefield, the deep piety of a Martyn, and the lovely spirit of a Newton or a Cowper! May He fill you to the brim with Himself, till you shall be like a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid—and like unto candles in the house that enlighten all around!

But alas! there are some here who know not my Master at all, who are strangers to His love. There is Christ looking down upon you with tearful eye and He bids you come to Him. That blood which you have hitherto despised will wash away your every sin. Only cast yourself upon Him. Look up into those languid eyes, for they are full of pity. That streaming blood flows to every soul that trusts in Jesus.

Read the mystery of that pierced heart—there is love alone written there. Study the anguish of that poor martyred body, for in every pang you can learn the story of His compassion. And as you see Him bowing His head and hear Him saying, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” He asks you, every one, to commend your spirit to Him. Do it, do it now, God helping you—and Christ will thus be glorified.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

GALATIANS 2:15-21; 3

Galatians 2:15-21. *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

Paul is arguing against the idea of salvation by works or salvation by ceremonies. And he shows, beyond all question, that salvation is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Mark the strength of the apostle's argument in the twenty-first verse—“If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” That is to say, there was no need for Christ to die—the crucifixion was a superfluity if men can save themselves by their own good works. Paul is very emphatic about the matter. He puts it as plainly as possible, “If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” [See sermon #1534, Salvation by Works, a Criminal Doctrine]

Galatians 3:1-2. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

“When the Spirit of God came upon you, and renewed you—when He endued some of you with miraculous gifts—did this power come by the works of the law or through your believing the Gospel? ‘Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?’” [See sermon #1705, The Hearing of Faith]

3. *Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

“Is this work to be partly God’s and partly your own? And if He has begun it with a basis of gold, are you to perfect it with your poor dust and clay? Are you so foolish as to attempt to do this?”

4-5. *Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

They knew very well that the miracles came as the result of faith, and were an attestation and seal of the Gospel of faith, and not of the works of the law.

6-7. *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

He was the father of the faithful—that is of the believing—not of those who trust in their own works. These are only like Ishmael, who must be cast out of the chosen family—but the true children, the real Isaacs, are those who are born according to the promise of grace.

8. *And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

That is, “In you, because you are the father of believers. You are a sort of head and prototype of men who believe in Me and so, ‘in thee shall all nations be blessed,’ and in your seed, too, as you shall be the father of the Christ, shall all nations be blessed.”

9-11. *So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*

If then, even those who are just live by faith, how can any expect that they shall live by their works? [See sermons #814, Life by Faith and #2809, Faith—Life]

12. *And the law is not of faith: but, The man that does them shall live in them.*

The law says nothing about faith. It speaks only about *doing*—“Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.”

13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* [See sermon #873, Made a Curse for Us and #2093, The Curse and The Curse for Us]

There is the key of the mystery. Christ is our Substitute. He fulfilled the law’s demands by His perfect obedience and He suffered the law’s utmost penalty by His death upon the cross. And now, all those who believe in Him are forever justified because of what He did for them.

14-15. *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed,*

If it be legally drawn up, signed, and sealed, and witnessed,—

15. *No man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.*

There it stands and an appeal can be made to it in any court of law where it may be produced.

16-17. *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.*

That is clear enough. The covenant made with Abraham and his seed cannot be affected by anything that was said or done on Sinai. Whatever the covenant of works may be, or say, or do, it comes in more

than four centuries after this glorious covenant of grace had been signed, and sealed, and ratified. And therefore it cannot be affected, it must stand fast forever.

18. *For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

So, then, we know it is by promise and God must keep His promise—and we must believe it. It must be true and if we do believe it, we shall prove it to be true, and it will be fulfilled in every jot and tittle to every believing soul.

19-22. *Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin,*

Or, “shut us all up under sin.” The law has come and proved us all guilty, and shut us all up as in a great prison from which we cannot escape by any power of our own. [See sermons #1145, The Great Jail—and How To Get Out of It and #2402, Under Arrest]

22-24. *That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,* [See sermon 1196, The Stern Pedagogue]

It whipped us to Christ and taught us that we could not be saved except by Christ.

24-28. *That we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Yet some foolish people still talk about our Israelitish origin. What would that matter even if it were true? “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free.” All these distinctions are done away with and Christ is all—and believers, whether Jews or Gentiles—“are all one in Christ Jesus.”

29. *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

So that all the blessings which God promised to Abraham belong to you who are believers in Christ, and you may take them and rejoice in them. But if you are without faith in Christ, then are you without the one essential thing which gives you an interest in the covenant of grace.

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